Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 22 May 2009

Message Text

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NODIS/CHEROKEE

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR MARR KS US
SUBJ: US GROUND FORCE WITHDRAWAL: SECOND MEETING WITH
PRESIDENT PARK

REF: SEOUL 4379

1. GENERAL BROWN AND UNDER SECRETARY HABIB HELD SECOND MEETING WITH PRESIDENT PARK AFTERNOON OF MAY 26, 1977. THEY WERE ACCOMP-ANIED BY AMBASSADOR, GENERAL VESSEY, AND O'DONOHUE. PRIM CHOI, PRESIDENT SECRETARY GENERAL KIM AND PROTOCOL SECRETARY CHOE WERE PRESENT ON KOREAN SIDE.

2. IN MEETING PRESIDENT PARK INDICATED THAT WE ALREADY HAD DETAILED EXCHANGE ON MAJOR POINTS IN MAY 25 MEETING. AS RESULT OF OUR DISCUSSIONS, PRESIDENT PARK INDICATED THAT OUTLINE OF OUR MUTUAL POSITIONS WAS CLEAR AND THAT THERE WAS BASIC UNDERSTAND-ING ON PRINCIPLES. HE INDICATED THAT FOLLOW-UP ON SPECIFIC ISSUES SHOULD BE BETWEEN OFFICIALS OF OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS AND SUGGESTED POSSIBILITY OF ESTABLISHING WORKING COMMITTEESON POLITICAL AND MILITARY ISSUES. HABIB NOTED THAT WE AGREED ON NEED TO ESTABLISH MECHANISM FOR FURTHER DETAILED DISCUSSIONS WITH LOCUS IN SEOUL. AT SAME TIME HE INDICATED THAT AT THIS POINT, THE FIRST TRDER IS TO REPORT TO PRESIDENT CARTER ON RESULTS OF OUR CONSULTATIONS HERE AS WELL AS CONVEYING PRESIDENT PARK'S

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VIEWS. AFTER REPORTING TO PRESIDENT WE WILL THEN BE IN A POSITION TO COMMUNICATE FURTHER WITH A VIEW TO ESTABLISHING APPROPRIATE MECHANISMS TO BEGIN DETAILED WORK IN PREPARAT ON FOR THE SCM. IN THE MEANTIME, AMBASSADOR SNEIDER AND GENERAL VESSEY WOULD REMAIN IN CONTACT WITH THEIR COUNTERPARTS TO FURTHER REFINE THE ISSUES WE HAVE DISCUSSED.

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3. PRESIDENT PARK INDICATED THAT HE WAS APPTINTING THE FOREIGN MINISTER AND THE MINISTER OF NATIONAL DEFENSE TO CONDUCT THE NEGOTIATIONS CONNECTED WITH THE GROUND FORCE WITHDRAWAL. HE HAD NO OBJECTION EITHER TO A JOINT COMMITTEE OR TO ESTABLISH-MENT OF SEPARAZE POLITICAL AND MILITARY COMMITTEES TO STUDY THE ISSUES. HOWEVER AN APPROPRIATE CONSULTATIVE MECHANISM SHOULD BE ESTABLISHED.

4. PRESIDENT PARK THEN RAISED AGAIN THE QUESTION OF THE U.S. RATIONALE FOR A GROUND FORCE WITHDRAWAL AT THIS TIME HE SAID THAT HE STILL COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY THE U.S. WOULD PULL OUT ITS FORCES AT THIS JUNCTURE.

5. IN LENGTHY PRESENTATION, HABIB EXPLAINED BACKGROUND TO THE PRESIDENT'S DECISION. HE POINTED OUT THAT OUR DECISION CAME AFTER CLOSE EXAMINATION OF THE SITUATION ON THE KOREAN PENINSULA, THE LARGER REGIONAL CONTEXT, AND PRESIDENT PARK'S OWN EFFORTS TO ESTABLISH MILITARY SELF RELIANCE. THE DECISION ALSO REFLECTED AN ASSESSMENT OF THE AMERICAN DOMESTIC SITUATION. AS A RESULT OF THAT EXAMINATION IT IS POSSIBLE TO MOVE FORWARD ON THE GROUND FORCE WITHDRAWAL WHILE MAINTAINING SUFFICIENT DETERRENCE THROUGH THE CREDIBLE REMAINING ROK AND AMERICAN FORCES AND IN THE CONTEXT OF A VERY SERIOUS REAFFIRMATION OF OUR SECURITY COMMIT-MENT.

6. HABIB POINTED OUT THAT OUR DECISION WAS ALSO A REFLECTION OF THE GROWING STRENGTH OF THE ROKG. DECISFON REFLECTS OUR ASSESSMENT OF THE DYNAMIC ECONOMIC GROWTH OF KOREA, THE SPIRIT AND MORALE OF THE KOREAN PEOPLE AND OUR CONFIDENCE IN THE CAPAB-

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ILITY OF THE KOREAN FORCES SUPPORTED BY A MODIFIED CONTNUING AMERICAN MILITARY PRESENCE. HABIB POINTED OUT THAT WE BELREVE THAT THE SECURITY CONCEPT WHICH WE ENVISION OVER THE NEXT FEW YEARS WOULD ENGENDER GREATER SUPPORT FOR OUR BASIC SECURITY RELATION-SHIP WITH THE ROKG BOTH WITH THE AMERICAN PUBLIC AND IN OUR CONGRESS. FURTHER, WE BELIEVE THE CREDIBILITY OF THE NEW ADMIN-ISTRATIONS REITERATION OF OUR SECURITY COMMITMENT WILL BE UNDER-STOOD AND ACCEPTED IN KOREA AND ELSEWHERE. WE WILL MAKE OUR DETERMINATION CLEAR TO NORTH KOREA AND ITS ALLIES TO REDUCE ANY CHANCE OF MISCALCULATION AS TO THE STRENGTH OF OUR SECURITY RELATIONSHIP.

7. PRESIDENT PARK INDICATED HE DID NOT WISH TO ENGAGE IN ARGUMENT OVER OUR RATIONALE. HOWEVER, HE DID WISH TO POINT OUT THAT INZ DISCUSSING ROK MILITARY SELU-RELIANCE HE WANTED TO BE SURE THAT WE UNDERSTOOD THAT HIS OBJECTIVE WAS TO BE ABLE TO REPEL ANY ATTACK FROM NORTH KOREA WHICH WAS UNSUPPORTED BY THE PRC AND THE USSR. HABIB SAID THAT WE HAD FULLY UNDERSTOOD THAT POINT AND OUR OWN POLICIES WERE BASED ON THAT PREMISE.

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8. IN SUMMING UP ROK POSITION, PRESIDENT PARK STRESSED THAT HIS ACCEPTANCE OF OUR OVER-ALL WITHDRAWAL SCHEDULE WAS PREDICATED ON IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REQUIRED COMPENSATORY MEASURES NEEDED TO ASSURE ROK'S SECURITY. N RESPONSE TO HABIB QUERY, PRESIDENT PARK CONFIRMED THAT ROKG POSITION IS THAT COMPENSATORY MEASURES SHOULD BE IMPLEMENTED IN PARALLEL WITH THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE FIRST TWO GROUND FORCE INCREMENTS AND THAT THESE COMPENSATORY MEASURES SHOULD BE COMPLETED BEFORE WITHDRAWAL OF THE FINAL INCREMENT. HE ALSO STRESSED IMPORTANCE OF U.S. EXECUTIVE BRANCH WORKING TO SECURE CONGRESSIONAL UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT FOR NEEDED COMPENSATORY MEASURES.

9. HABIB PROMISED TO REPORT FULLY TO PRESIDENT CARTER THE CONTENTS OF THE CONVERSATIONS AND INDICATED APPRECIATION FOR CONSTRUCTIVE FRANK ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH DISCUSSIONS WERE CONDUCTED. HE NOTED THAT OUR INITIAL APPROACH TO TROOP WITHDRAWAL

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ISSUE HAD BEEN THE WAY IN WHICH CLOSE ALLIES SHOULD ADDRESS THESE PROBLEMS.

10. IN CLOSING HABIB INDICATED THAT WE WOULD BE SEEING PRIME MINISTER FUKUDA WHILE IN TOKYO. PRESIDENT PARK ASKED THAT WE CONVEY PRIVATE MESSAGE TO FUKUDA. PRESIDENT PARK SAID THAT FUKUDA SHOULD UNDERSTAND THAT ROKG HAS NO INTENTION OF REQUESTING THE GOJ TO PROVIDE ASSISTANCE FOR KOREAN SECURITY. HE RECOGNIZES THAT THE GOJ IS IN NO POSITION TO DO SO. AT THE SAME TIME, SINCE GOJ HAS REITERATED THAT SECURITY OF KOREA IS IMPORTANT TO THE SECURITY OF JAPAN PRESIDENT PARK HOPES IT WILL SHOW SINCERITY BY AVOIDING ANY RASH APPROACH TO NORTH KOREA WHICH WOULD ONLY FURTHER EXACERBATE THE FEELINGS OF THE KOREAN PEOPLE. HABIB INDICATED THAT HE WOULD CONVEY THAT MESSAGE.

11. COMMENT: SECOND MEETING WITH PARK HAS CONFIRMED HIS ACCEPTANCE OF ESSENTIALS OF OUR WITHDRAWAL SCHEDULE. HE HAS ALSO MADE CLEAR THAT ROKG INTENDS TO PRESS HARD ON QUESTION OF COMPENSATORY MEASURES. PARK AGAIN MADE CLEAR FOR THE RECORD HIS RESERVATIONS ABOUT OUR BASIC DECISION WHILE IN RESTRAINED, STATESMANLIKE MANNER ACCEPTING IT. BLUSE HOUSE STAFF TELLS US THAT THEY BELIEVE MEETINGS WITH PRESIDENT PARK WERE VERY GOOD.

12. SEPTELS REPORT SEPARATE MEETINGS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER PARK AND DEFENSE MINISTER SUH. IN THOSE MEETINGS SPECIFIC ISSUES ATTENDANT TO GROUND FORCE WITHDRAWAL WERE DISCUSSED IN GREATER DETAIL.
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